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FOR

**A METHOD FOR MAKING A SEMICONDUCTOR
DEVICE HAVING A HIGH-K GATE DIELECTRIC
LAYER AND A METAL GATE ELECTRODE**

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A METHOD FOR MAKING A SEMICONDUCTOR DEVICE HAVING A HIGH-K GATE DIELECTRIC LAYER AND A METAL GATE ELECTRODE

5 FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to methods for making semiconductor devices, in particular, semiconductor devices that include metal gate electrodes.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

10 MOS field-effect transistors with very thin gate dielectrics made from silicon dioxide may experience unacceptable gate leakage currents. Forming the gate dielectric from certain high-k dielectric materials, instead of silicon dioxide, can reduce gate leakage. Because, however, such a dielectric may not be compatible with polysilicon, it may be desirable to use metal gate electrodes in devices that include high-k gate dielectrics.

15 When making a CMOS device that includes metal gate electrodes, a replacement gate process may be used to form gate electrodes from different metals. In that process, a first polysilicon layer, bracketed by a pair of spacers, is removed to create a trench between the spacers. The trench is filled with a first metal. A second polysilicon layer is then removed, and replaced with a
20 second metal that differs from the first metal. Because this process requires multiple etch, deposition, and polish steps, high volume manufacturers of semiconductor devices may be reluctant to use it.

 Rather than apply a replacement gate process to form a metal gate electrode on a high-k gate dielectric layer, a subtractive approach may be used.
25 In such a process, a metal gate electrode is formed on a high-k gate dielectric

layer by depositing a metal layer on the dielectric layer, masking the metal layer, and then removing the uncovered part of the metal layer and the underlying portion of the dielectric layer. Unfortunately, the exposed sidewalls of the resulting high-k gate dielectric layer render that layer susceptible to lateral oxidation, which may adversely affect its physical and electrical properties.

Accordingly, there is a need for an improved process for making a semiconductor device that includes a high-k gate dielectric layer and a metal gate electrode. There is a need for such a process that may be suitable for high volume manufacturing. The method of the present invention provides such a process.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figures 1a-1f represent cross-sections of structures that may be formed when carrying out an embodiment of the method of the present invention.

Figures 2a-2f represent cross-sections of structures that may be formed when carrying out the embodiment of figures 1a-1f to generate a device that includes a P/N junction within a trench.

Figures 3a-3b represent cross-sections of structures that may be formed when carrying out a second embodiment of the method of the present invention.

Figures 4a-4b represent cross-sections of structures that may be formed when carrying out the embodiment of figures 3a-3b to generate a device that includes a P/N junction within a trench.

Features shown in these figures are not intended to be drawn to scale.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PRESENT INVENTION

A method for making a semiconductor device is described. That method comprises forming a first dielectric layer on a substrate, then forming a trench within the first dielectric layer. After forming a second dielectric layer on the substrate, a first metal layer is formed on a first part of the second dielectric layer, but not on a second part of the second dielectric layer. A second metal layer is then formed on the first metal layer and on the second part of the second dielectric layer.

In the following description, a number of details are set forth to provide a thorough understanding of the present invention. It will be apparent to those skilled in the art, however, that the invention may be practiced in many ways other than those expressly described here. The invention is thus not limited by the specific details disclosed below.

Figures 1a-1f illustrate structures that may be formed, when carrying out an embodiment of the method of the present invention. Figure 1a represents an intermediate structure that may be formed when making a CMOS device. That structure includes first part 101 and second part 102 of substrate 100. Isolation region 103 separates first part 101 from second part 102. First polysilicon layer 104 is formed on dielectric layer 105, and second polysilicon layer 106 is formed on dielectric layer 107. First polysilicon layer 104 is bracketed by a pair of sidewall spacers 108, 109, and second polysilicon layer 106 is bracketed by a pair of sidewall spacers 110, 111. Dielectric 112 lies next to the sidewall spacers.

Substrate 100 may comprise a bulk silicon or silicon-on-insulator substructure. Alternatively, substrate 100 may comprise other materials -- which may or may not be combined with silicon -- such as: germanium, indium antimonide, lead telluride, indium arsenide, indium phosphide, gallium arsenide, or gallium antimonide. Although a few examples of materials from which substrate 100 may be formed are described here, any material that may serve as a foundation upon which a semiconductor device may be built falls within the spirit and scope of the present invention.

Isolation region 103 may comprise silicon dioxide, or other materials that may separate the transistor's active regions. Dielectric layers 105, 107 may each comprise silicon dioxide, or other materials that may insulate the substrate from other substances. First and second polysilicon layers 104, 106 preferably are each between about 100 and about 2,000 angstroms thick, and more preferably between about 500 and about 1,600 angstroms thick. Those layers each may be undoped or doped with similar substances. Alternatively, one layer may be doped, while the other is not doped, or one layer may be doped n-type (e.g., with arsenic, phosphorus or another n-type material), while the other is doped p-type (e.g., with boron or another p-type material). Spacers 108, 109, 110, 111 preferably comprise silicon nitride, while dielectric 112 may comprise silicon dioxide, or a low-k material. Dielectric 112 may be doped with phosphorus, boron, or other elements, and may be formed using a high density plasma deposition process.

Conventional process steps, materials, and equipment may be used to generate the figure 1a structure, as will be apparent to those skilled in the art. As shown, dielectric 112 may be polished back, e.g., via a conventional chemical mechanical polishing ("CMP") operation, to expose first and second polysilicon layers 104, 106. Although not shown, the figure 1a structure may include many other features (e.g., a silicon nitride etch stop layer, source and drain regions, and one or more buffer layers) that may be formed using conventional processes.

When source and drain regions are formed using conventional ion implantation and anneal processes, it may be desirable to form a hard mask on polysilicon layers 104, 106 -- and an etch stop layer on the hard mask -- to protect layers 104, 106 when the source and drain regions are covered with a silicide. The hard mask may comprise silicon nitride, and the etch stop layer may comprise a material that will be removed at a substantially slower rate than silicon nitride will be removed when an appropriate etch process is applied. Such an etch stop layer may, for example, be made from silicon, an oxide (e.g., silicon dioxide or hafnium dioxide), or a carbide (e.g., silicon carbide).

Such an etch stop layer and silicon nitride hard mask may be polished from the surface of layers 104, 106, when dielectric layer 112 is polished -- as those layers will have served their purpose by that stage in the process. Figure 1a represents a structure in which any hard mask or etch stop layer, which may have been previously formed on layers 104, 106, has already been removed from the surface of those layers. When ion implantation processes are used to

form the source and drain regions, layers 104, 106 may be doped at the same time the source and drain regions are implanted. In such a process, first polysilicon layer 104 may be doped n-type, while second polysilicon layer 106 is doped p-type – or vice versa.

5 After forming the figure 1a structure, first and second polysilicon layers 104, 106 are removed. In a preferred embodiment, those layers are removed by applying a wet etch process, or processes. Such a wet etch process may comprise exposing layers 104, 106 to an aqueous solution that comprises a source of hydroxide for a sufficient time at a sufficient temperature to remove
10 substantially all of those layers. That source of hydroxide may comprise between about 2 and about 30 percent ammonium hydroxide or a tetraalkyl ammonium hydroxide, e.g., tetramethyl ammonium hydroxide ("TMAH"), by volume in deionized water.

 An n-type polysilicon layer may be removed by exposing it to a solution,
15 which is maintained at a temperature between about 15°C and about 90°C (and preferably below about 40°C), that comprises between about 2 and about 30 percent ammonium hydroxide by volume in deionized water. During that exposure step, which preferably lasts at least one minute, it may be desirable to apply sonic energy at a frequency of between about 10 KHz and about 2,000
20 KHz, while dissipating at between about 1 and about 10 watts/cm². For example, an n-type polysilicon layer that is about 1,350 angstroms thick may be removed by exposing it at about 25°C for about 30 minutes to a solution that comprises

about 15 percent ammonium hydroxide by volume in deionized water, while applying sonic energy at about 1,000 KHz -- dissipating at about 5 watts/cm².

As an alternative, an n-type polysilicon layer may be removed by exposing it for at least one minute to a solution, which is maintained at a temperature
5 between about 60°C and about 90°C, that comprises between about 20 and about 30 percent TMAH by volume in deionized water, while applying sonic energy. Substantially all of such an n-type polysilicon layer that is about 1,350 angstroms thick may be removed by exposing it at about 80°C for about 2 minutes to a solution that comprises about 25 percent TMAH by volume in
10 deionized water, while applying sonic energy at about 1,000 KHz -- dissipating at about 5 watts/cm².

A p-type polysilicon layer may also be removed by exposing it to a solution that comprises between about 20 and about 30 percent TMAH by volume in deionized water for a sufficient time at a sufficient temperature (e.g.,
15 between about 60°C and about 90°C), while applying sonic energy. Those skilled in the art will recognize that the particular wet etch process, or processes, that should be used to remove first and second polysilicon layers 104, 106 will vary, depending upon whether none, one or both of those layers are doped, e.g., one layer is doped n-type and the other p-type.

20 For example, if layer 104 is doped n-type and layer 106 is doped p-type, it may be desirable to first apply an ammonium hydroxide based wet etch process to remove the n-type layer followed by applying a TMAH based wet etch process

to remove the p-type layer. Alternatively, it may be desirable to simultaneously remove layers 104, 106 with an appropriate TMAH based wet etch process.

After removing first and second polysilicon layers 104, 106, dielectric layers 105, 107 are exposed. In this embodiment, layers 105, 107 are removed.

5 When dielectric layers 105, 107 comprise silicon dioxide, they may be removed using an etch process that is selective for silicon dioxide. Such an etch process may comprise exposing layers 105, 107 to a solution that includes about 1 percent HF in deionized water. The time layers 105, 107 are exposed should be limited, as the etch process for removing those layers may also remove part of
10 dielectric layer 112. With that in mind, if a 1 percent HF based solution is used to remove layers 105, 107, the device preferably should be exposed to that solution for less than about 60 seconds, and more preferably for about 30 seconds or less. As shown in figure 1b, removal of dielectric layers 105, 107 leaves trenches 113, 114 within dielectric layer 112 positioned between sidewall
15 spacers 108, 109, and sidewall spacers 110, 111 respectively.

After removing dielectric layers 105, 107, dielectric layer 115 is formed on substrate 100. Preferably, dielectric layer 115 comprises a high-k gate dielectric layer. Some of the materials that may be used to make such a high-k gate dielectric layer include: hafnium oxide, hafnium silicon oxide, lanthanum oxide,
20 zirconium oxide, zirconium silicon oxide, tantalum oxide, titanium oxide, barium strontium titanium oxide, barium titanium oxide, strontium titanium oxide, yttrium oxide, aluminum oxide, lead scandium tantalum oxide, and lead zinc niobate. Particularly preferred are hafnium oxide, zirconium oxide, and aluminum oxide.

Although a few examples of materials that may be used to form a high-k gate dielectric layer are described here, that layer may be made from other materials.

High-k gate dielectric layer 115 may be formed on substrate 100 using a conventional deposition method, e.g., a conventional chemical vapor deposition (5 “CVD”), low pressure CVD, or physical vapor deposition (“PVD”) process.

Preferably, a conventional atomic layer CVD process is used. In such a process, a metal oxide precursor (e.g., a metal chloride) and steam may be fed at selected flow rates into a CVD reactor, which is then operated at a selected temperature and pressure to generate an atomically smooth interface between 10 substrate 100 and high-k gate dielectric layer 115. The CVD reactor should be operated long enough to form a layer with the desired thickness. In most applications, high-k gate dielectric layer 115 should be less than about 60 angstroms thick, and more preferably between about 5 angstroms and about 40 angstroms thick.

15 As shown in figure 1c, when an atomic layer CVD process is used to form high-k gate dielectric layer 115, that layer will form on the sides of trenches 113, 114 in addition to forming on the bottom of those trenches. If high-k gate dielectric layer 115 comprises an oxide, it may manifest oxygen vacancies at random surface sites and unacceptable impurity levels, depending upon the 20 process used to make it. It may be desirable to remove impurities from layer 115, and to oxidize it to generate a layer with a nearly idealized metal:oxygen stoichiometry, after layer 115 is deposited.

To remove impurities from that layer and to increase that layer's oxygen content, a wet chemical treatment may be applied to high-k gate dielectric layer 115. Such a wet chemical treatment may comprise exposing high-k gate dielectric layer 115 to a solution that comprises hydrogen peroxide at a sufficient temperature for a sufficient time to remove impurities from high-k gate dielectric layer 115 and to increase the oxygen content of high-k gate dielectric layer 115. The appropriate time and temperature at which high-k gate dielectric layer 115 is exposed may depend upon the desired thickness and other properties for high-k gate dielectric layer 115.

When high-k gate dielectric layer 115 is exposed to a hydrogen peroxide based solution, an aqueous solution that contains between about 2% and about 30% hydrogen peroxide by volume may be used. That exposure step should take place at between about 15°C and about 40°C for at least about one minute. In a particularly preferred embodiment, high-k gate dielectric layer 115 is exposed to an aqueous solution that contains about 6.7% H_2O_2 by volume for about 10 minutes at a temperature of about 25°C. During that exposure step, it may be desirable to apply sonic energy at a frequency of between about 10 KHz and about 2,000 KHz, while dissipating at between about 1 and about 10 watts/cm². In a preferred embodiment, sonic energy may be applied at a frequency of about 1,000 KHz, while dissipating at about 5 watts/cm².

Although not shown in figure 1c, it may be desirable to form a capping layer, which is no more than about five monolayers thick, on high-k gate dielectric layer 115. Such a capping layer may be formed by sputtering one to

five monolayers of silicon, or another material, onto the surface of high-k gate dielectric layer 115. The capping layer may then be oxidized, e.g., by using a plasma enhanced chemical vapor deposition process or a solution that contains an oxidizing agent, to form a capping dielectric oxide.

5 Although in some embodiments it may be desirable to form a capping layer on high-k gate dielectric layer 115, in the illustrated embodiment, metal layer 116 is formed directly on layer 115 to generate the figure 1c structure. Metal layer 116 may comprise any conductive material from which a metal gate electrode may be derived, and may be formed on high-k gate dielectric layer 115
10 using well known PVD or CVD processes. Examples of n-type materials that may be used to form metal layer 116 include: hafnium, zirconium, titanium, tantalum, aluminum, and metal carbides that include these elements, i.e., titanium carbide, zirconium carbide, tantalum carbide, hafnium carbide and aluminum carbide. Examples of p-type metals that may be used include:
15 ruthenium, palladium, platinum, cobalt, nickel, and conductive metal oxides, e.g., ruthenium oxide. Although a few examples of materials that may be used to form metal layer 116 are described here, that layer may be made from many other materials.

 Metal layer 116 should be thick enough to ensure that any material
20 formed on it will not significantly impact its workfunction. Preferably, metal layer 116 is between about 25 angstroms and about 300 angstroms thick, and more preferably is between about 25 angstroms and about 200 angstroms thick. When metal layer 116 comprises an n-type material, layer 116 preferably has a

workfunction that is between about 3.9 eV and about 4.2 eV. When metal layer 116 comprises a p-type material, layer 116 preferably has a workfunction that is between about 4.9 eV and about 5.2 eV.

After forming metal layer 116 on high-k gate dielectric layer 115, part of
5 metal layer 116 is masked. The exposed part of metal layer 116 is then removed, followed by removing any masking material, to generate the structure of figure 1d. In that structure, first metal layer 117 is formed on first part 118 of high-k gate dielectric layer 115, such that first metal layer 117 covers first part 118 of high-k gate dielectric layer 115, but does not cover second part 119 of
10 high-k gate dielectric layer 115. Although conventional techniques may be applied to mask part of metal layer 116, then to remove the exposed part of that layer, it may be desirable to use a spin on glass ("SOG") material as the masking material, as described below.

In this embodiment, second metal layer 120 is then deposited on first
15 metal layer 117 and exposed second part 119 of high-k gate dielectric layer 115 – generating the structure illustrated by figure 1e. If first metal layer 117 comprises an n-type metal, e.g., one of the n-type metals identified above, then second metal layer 120 preferably comprises a p-type metal, e.g., one of the p-type metals identified above. Conversely, if first metal layer 117 comprises a p-
20 type metal, then second metal layer 120 preferably comprises an n-type metal.

Second metal layer 120 may be formed on high-k gate dielectric layer 115 and first metal layer 117 using a conventional PVD or CVD process, preferably is between about 25 angstroms and about 300 angstroms thick, and more

preferably is between about 25 angstroms and about 200 angstroms thick. If second metal layer 120 comprises an n-type material, layer 120 preferably has a workfunction that is between about 3.9 eV and about 4.2 eV. If second metal layer 120 comprises a p-type material, layer 120 preferably has a workfunction
5 that is between about 4.9 eV and about 5.2 eV.

In this embodiment, after depositing second metal layer 120 on layers 117 and 115, the remainder of trenches 113, 114 is filled with a material that may be easily polished, e.g., tungsten, aluminum, titanium, or titanium nitride. Such a trench fill metal, e.g., metal 121, may be deposited over the entire device using a
10 conventional metal deposition process. That trench fill metal may then be polished back so that it fills only trenches 113, 114, as shown in 1f.

After removing trench fill metal 121, except where it fills trenches 113, 114, a capping dielectric layer (not shown) may be deposited onto the resulting structure using any conventional deposition process. Process steps for
15 completing the device that follow the deposition of such a capping dielectric layer, e.g., forming the device's contacts, metal interconnect, and passivation layer, are well known to those skilled in the art and will not be described here.

Figures 2a-2f represent cross-sections of structures that may be formed when carrying out the embodiment of figures 1a-1f to generate a device that
20 includes a P/N junction. Such a device may, for example, comprise an SRAM, which may be used in process development work. Figures 2a-2f represent structures that are oriented perpendicular to the plane of the cross-sections represented in figures 1a-1f. In this respect, figures 2a-2f represent cross-

sections that result when the device is rotated 90° from the position shown in figures 1a-1f. Figures 2a-2f correspond to the structures built within trench 113, as figures 1a-1f illustrate.

In this embodiment, figure 2a shows polysilicon layers 104, 122 that are
5 formed on dielectric layer 105, which is formed on substrate 100. This structure may be generated using materials and process steps described above.

Although this embodiment illustrates two polysilicon layers, which may be doped differently, in alternative embodiments a single polysilicon layer may be formed on dielectric layer 105.

10 After forming the figure 2a structure, polysilicon layers 104, 122 and dielectric layer 105 are removed, e.g., using process steps described above, to generate trench 113 – as figure 2b illustrates. Trench 113 is then coated with high-k gate dielectric layer 115 and metal layer 116 to generate the figure 2c structure. Because process steps and materials for forming those layers have
15 been described previously, further recitation will not be presented here.

Part of metal layer 116 is then masked, and the exposed part of that layer is then removed (followed by removing any masking material) to generate the structure of figure 2d. In that structure, first metal layer 117 is formed on first part 118 of high-k gate dielectric layer 115, such that first metal layer 117 covers
20 first part 118 of high-k gate dielectric layer 115, but does not cover second part 123 of high-k gate dielectric layer 115.

Second metal layer 120 is then formed on high-k gate dielectric layer 115 and first metal layer 117, as figure 2e illustrates. The remainder of trench 113 is

then filled with a material (e.g., trench fill metal 121) that may be easily polished. That trench fill metal is removed except where it fills trench 113, as shown in 2f. A conventional CMP operation may be used to polish back the trench fill metal. Process steps for completing the device are omitted, as they are well known to
5 those skilled in the art.

In the embodiment represented by figures 2a-2f, a first metal layer is formed on a first part of the high-k gate dielectric layer, followed by forming a second metal layer on the first metal layer and on a second part of the high-k gate dielectric layer. The metal layers are of different conductivity type. If first
10 metal layer 117 is n-type, then second metal layer 120 is p-type. If first metal layer 117 is p-type, then second metal layer 120 is n-type. In the resulting device, P/N junction 124 resides where first metal layer 117 meets second metal layer 120.

In devices with the figure 2f structure, an adjacent trench (e.g., trench 114
15 of figures 1a-1f – not shown in figure 2f) may have a P/N junction with the reverse orientation. Within such an adjacent trench, second metal layer 120 may contact high-k gate dielectric layer 115 where first metal layer 117 contacts that dielectric layer in figure 2f, while first metal layer 117 may contact high-k gate dielectric layer 115 where second metal layer 120 contacts that dielectric layer in
20 figure 2f.

Although the embodiment of figures 2a-2f illustrates a method for forming a structure with a P/N junction, other embodiments may form devices that do not include a P/N junction. For example, in other devices, the combination of first

metal layer 117 and second metal layer 120, shown in figure 1f, may coat trench 113 along its entire width, while second metal layer 120, shown in figure 1f, coats trench 114 along its entire width. The method of the present invention is thus not limited to forming devices with P/N junctions.

5 Figures 3a-3b represent cross-sections of structures that may be formed when carrying out a second embodiment of the method of the present invention. In this second embodiment, an SOG material is used to mask a metal layer prior to etching the metal layer. As shown in figure 3a, SOG layer 125 may be formed on metal layer 116. First part 126 of SOG layer 125 covers first part 118 of high-
10 k gate dielectric layer 115, while second part 127 of SOG layer 125 covers second part 119 of high-k gate dielectric layer 115. Mask 128 (e.g., a patterned layer of photoresist) covers first part 126 of SOG layer 125. SOG layer 125 may be deposited on metal layer 116, and mask 128 may be generated, using conventional processes, as will be apparent to those skilled in the art.

15 Second part 127 of SOG layer 125 is then removed, while first part 126 of SOG layer 125 is retained. A conventional SOG etch process may be used to remove second part 127. That removal step exposes part 129 of metal layer 116. Exposed part 129 of metal layer 116 is then removed, as figure 3b illustrates. After removing exposed part 129, mask 128 and first part 126 of SOG
20 layer 125, a structure like the one figure 1d represents results. Conventional process steps may be used to remove exposed part 129, mask 128, and first part 126.

Applying an SOG material as the masking material in the method of the present invention may be beneficial for at least the following reasons. Such an SOG material may fill narrow trenches that other materials, e.g., photoresist, may not adequately fill. In addition, conventional etch processes for removing SOG materials may effectively remove such materials without removing a significant part of the underlying metal layer.

Figures 4a-4b represent cross-sections of structures that may be formed when carrying out the embodiment of figures 3a-3b to generate a device that includes a P/N junction. Figures 4a-4b have a similar orientation with respect to figures 3a-3b that figures 2a-2f have with respect to figures 1a-1f. As shown in figure 4a, SOG layer 125 may be formed on metal layer 116. Mask 128 covers first part 126 of SOG layer 125. Second part 130 of SOG layer 125 is removed, while first part 126 of SOG layer 125 is retained, exposing part 131 of metal layer 116. Exposed part 131 is then removed, as figure 4b illustrates. After removing exposed part 131 of metal layer 116, mask 128, and first part 126 of SOG layer 125, a second metal layer – like second metal layer 120 of figure 2e – may be deposited onto the remaining part of metal layer 116 and the adjacent exposed part of the high-k gate dielectric layer to generate a structure like the structure of figure 2e. Although figures 4a-4b illustrate an embodiment of the present invention in which an SOG masking layer is used to form a device with a P/N junction, this embodiment is not limited to forming devices with P/N junctions.

Although not included in the embodiments described above, an underlayer metal may be formed on the high-k gate dielectric layer prior to

forming the first metal layer. That underlayer metal may comprise any of the metals identified above, may be formed using any of the previously described process steps, and may have approximately the same thickness as the high-k gate dielectric layer. The underlayer metal may comprise a material that differs
5 from those used to make the first and second metal layers, or may comprise a material like the material used to make either the first metal layer or the second metal layer.

As illustrated above, the method of the present invention enables production of CMOS devices that include a high-k gate dielectric layer and metal
10 gate electrodes with appropriate workfunctions for both NMOS and PMOS transistors. This method may be less burdensome to integrate into conventional semiconductor manufacturing processes, when compared to other types of replacement gate processes. Because this method forms the high-k gate dielectric layer within a trench, undesirable lateral oxidation of that layer may be
15 eliminated, or at least significantly reduced. Although the embodiments described above provide examples of processes for forming CMOS devices with a high-k gate dielectric layer and metal gate electrodes, the present invention is not limited to these particular embodiments.

Although the foregoing description has specified certain steps and
20 materials that may be used in the present invention, those skilled in the art will appreciate that many modifications and substitutions may be made. Accordingly, all such modifications, alterations, substitutions and additions fall within the spirit and scope of the invention as defined by the appended claims.